



WHITE PAPER

Advancing Your Business with Effective Training Strategies

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Today's Training Landscape

In today's knowledge economy, attracting and retaining the right person at the right time for the right role is key to success. Talent development activities—including recruiting, onboarding, performance management, employee engagement and compensation—are all essential to achieve mission goals.

Training is a specific type of talent management solution. It focuses on teaching adult learners the skills needed to achieve their tasks and improve organizational outcomes. From introducing organization policies, to teaching project management skills, to developing underused strengths in leaders, training plays a vital role in the talent development toolkit.

Key Trends in Training

Enhanced, technology-driven, online training
Stronger links created between training and business results

While training used to occur almost exclusively in classroom settings, the evolution of online training (or eLearning) has diversified that landscape. A 2014 study found that almost half of training hours (47%) were in a classroom setting; 29% of hours were spent using a combination of face-to-face and online (or blended) learning methods; and 28% of training hours were delivered exclusively online. We are now also seeing rises in mobile and social learning as well (Pappas, 2015).

Organizations are choosing to invest in training at increasing rates. One study (Deloitte's Corporate Learning Factbook 2014) estimated that U.S. spending on corporate training grew by 15% in 2013, the highest growth rate in seven years, to over \$70-billion in the U.S. and over \$130-billion worldwide.

Another study of 336 diverse organizations reported that, in 2014, organizations spent an

\$1,229

Average investment per year in employee training

50% >\$100

Half of organizations spend >\$100 per person per year for training

34.4

Average number of learning hours per year per person

average of \$1,229 per employee on learning. This was an increase of 1.7% over 2013, when spending was at \$1,208 per employee (ADT Research, 2015). With respect to the number of people trained, one study found that almost 50% of surveyed companies were spending at least \$100 per learner per year (Wentworth and Lombardi, 2014); another found that the average number of learning hours per employee was 32.4 hours in 2014, compared with 31.5 hours in 2013 (ADT Research, 2015).

The Return on Investment for Training

Why are these organizations investing in training? Many cite capability gaps in organizations, estimating it can take 3-5 years before a professional is fully productive in a new company. Another study found that poor project performance leads organizations to waste \$122 million for every \$1 billion invested (Project Management Institute, 2016). Avoiding wasted dollars is a key goal of training, and helps explain why top training areas include management and leadership, at 35% of training spending (Bersin, 2014).

Training also helps organizations avoid risks and costs by teaching employees how to comply with a range of regulations and legal requirements; the benefits of this cost avoidance is hard to quantify. Organizations provide training to demonstrate compliance with health and safety requirements, financial and personnel management rules, human resources topics (such as diversity training and equal opportunity training) and training to teach the core requirements of federal and state statutes.

How do we maximize the return on investment? Those accountable for training programs should carefully consider the related business needs or problems. How can we expect a training event to affect organization metrics, such as quality, customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, efficiency and productivity? Gekoski (1999) recommends that organizations consider these impacts across three timeframes: immediate outcomes (immediate satisfaction and skills improvement), short-term benefits (increased morale and efficiency) and long-term value (reduced turnover, impact on customer satisfaction and costs).

A Look at Learning Models

Over time, training has been shifting from classroom settings to online learning environments. Different training delivery models have different advantages and drawbacks.

Please see the following chart showing types of training and the benefits and drawbacks associated with those types of training.

Learning Platform with Benefits and Drawbacks

MODEL	BENEFITS	DRAWBACKS
Classroom: Live, instructor-led	Social and interactive, creating participant experiences Facilitates networking—lasts beyond training Good for complex interpersonal content and role-plays	Success highly dependent on trainer and class High investments in scheduling logistics and facility expenses Limited class size complicates training large learner population
Online: Live, instructor-led	Instructor can often facilitate online engagement Great for large, distributed audiences Relatively low cost and low logistical complexity	Lacks social element of interaction experience Success linked to instructor pacing and tone Requires technology support and investment for connections
Online: Self-paced, on-demand	After initial investment, cost per learner relatively low Great for distributed audiences with different timing needs Training content controlled centrally; ensures consistency	Lacks social element of interaction experience Makes it difficult for learner to seek clarification on content Harder to adapt to diverse learner needs
Online with Support: Self-paced with supplemental post-training engagement	Same benefits of self-paced training, but with supplemental “high touch” check-ins or lunch and learns Helps validate learning and tie content to learner’s needs Gives more opportunities for feedback and support	Requires process and logistical cost for coordinating post-learner engagement Requires engagement lead to link training to learner experience Follow-up may be uneven without accountability

Cross-Model Best Practices

A number of best practices apply across all learning platforms:

Clear Structure and Agenda: Adult learners need to know there is a plan and structure to the learning experience. Having and sticking with the plan shows respect for audiences, and ensures key learning points are covered.

Practical, Real-World Applications: Training should focus on solving practical problems and

meeting mission needs. Learners are more likely to practice a skill developed in training if it applies to a problem at hand. Case studies, scenarios and practical examples are key.

Multi-Model Format: Adult learners need to see, hear and do. Both face-to-face and online learning can use multiple senses: I see slides, I hear your voice and I engage with the content through testing or case study choices.

Adaptive: Particularly with compliance training, provide ways for learners to control their experience based on need. This may include test-out options, pre-test and post-test comparisons and optional or alternative segments for online training based on role and need.

Evaluating Training Impact

Exercises and tests during training keep learners engaged, and assess short-term understanding and skill mastery. However, to assess the long-term organizational impact of training, consider tracking:

- Periodic testing post-training to assess skill retention.
- Before and after 360-degree feedback to measure impact on others.

- Organization-wide improvements in culture surveys, retention, quality or customer service.

Assessing the impact of training on business results can be a challenge; however, planning a measurement strategy in advance of launching a training program can help. For example, your organization decides to invest in a third-party on-demand training service for your employees. What organizational metrics are you intending to influence with the training? Gather “as-is” measures before investing in the training, and then plan to benchmark against these measures after the training has been in place for some period of time. While many factors may influence long-term results, these before-and-after measures may help you assess the return on investment for your organization.

Examples of Links Between Training Focus and Possible Organizational Measures

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 360-assessment scores• Internal staff promotion rates• Project success rates• Culture survey elements: supervision, leadership
CUSTOMER SERVICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer survey responses• Number of complaints• Job satisfaction scores among customer service staff
QUALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Defect and rework measures• Number of complaints• Production time• Number of returned products

eLearning: The Technology Landscape

One recent cross-study review found that the self-paced eLearning market has been growing at approximately 9% per year since 2010. An estimated 77% of U.S. companies provide some form of online corporate training (Pappas, 2015). Given this growth, let's take a close look at the technology landscape associated with eLearning tools.

The Difference Between Training Management and Content Development

When sourcing training providers and solutions, consider both **training management** and **content development**. While these two functions often

Key Concept: Scorm Compliance

To assess the compatibility of training content and an LMS, ask about SCORM compliance. The Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) is a collection of technology standards that specify how training content can integrate effectively with an industry-standard LMS.

involve different tools, they should work hand-in-hand for a seamless experience.

Training management focuses on the administrative tracking and reporting of learner activity, including training

registration and scheduling, class enrollment, pre-work and post-work management, certification tracking, test tracking, training feedback/ratings and reporting. Often, these functions are provided through a Learning Management System (LMS).

Content development focuses on the training materials themselves. For example, content may include training slides, tests, activity or exercise instructions and instructor guides. For online training, a variety of content authoring tools

help training developers integrate slides, voice-overs, alternative content paths and tests into an integrated package.

There are different degrees of integration between training management tools and training content. A robust LMS tracks training, but also serves online content. The LMS tracks learner progress throughout the training module, stores test results and presents alternative content paths based on user activity. Less sophisticated training systems may activate a training module housed on a different website, but may not track or confirm completion once the learner leaves the site.

A Closer Look at Learning Management Systems (LMS)

An LMS is a software tool, usually hosted on an internet accessible server, used to manage training administration, delivery, tracking and reporting at an enterprise level. As noted above, an LMS works in concert with a training content delivery mechanism. Many factors drive the selection of an LMS. Here are some key capabilities to consider in evaluating one for your organization:

Common LMS Reporting Capabilities

Performance Management
(development plans, training completed lists)

Certification Tracking
(certification expiration dates, logs of continuing education credits)

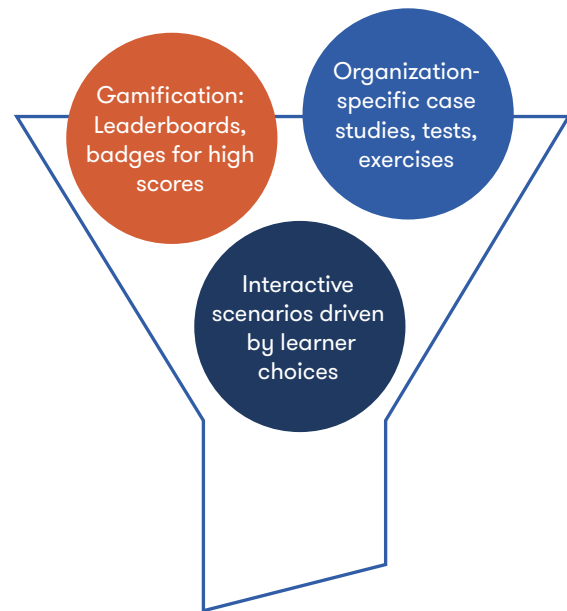
Learner Reporting
(reporting of independent self-guided training or external training events)

Compliance Reporting
(demonstrating organization's attainment of contract requirements)

- Ability to integrate or interface well with our existing training content, or the authoring tool you use to create new content; sophistication of integration between training content and testing/score logging capabilities
- Ability for the LMS to exchange data with an existing Human Resources information system (e.g., to facilitate training needs identification based on role or location) or an existing LMS you want to move away from
- Automated scheduling and email notifications (e.g., to support onboarding training sign-up, annual certification/compliance training reminders)
- Reporting capabilities to support regular compliance reporting and audits; metrics such as training hours per year; and course popularity
- Compliance with existing technical architecture and security requirements
- Ability to meet special requirements, such as multi-lingual support, mobile learning, social learning (e.g., integration with existing corporate social networks)
- Cost (initial investment, maintenance and license cost per seat)

Increasing Engagement While Managing Costs

Many organizations are moving to eLearning because this training model can reach large distributed audiences with standardized material at a lower cost. For training to have impact on business results, however, it must also be engaging. Here are some approaches for maximizing engagement in eLearning environments.



GOAL: INCREASE ENGAGEMENT FOR BUSINESS IMPACT

Collaborating with Information Technology (IT) Teams

The move to eLearning also requires close collaboration between the learning team and technical support professionals in your organization. Involving technical staff upfront and building a long-term relationship with them is critical to success.

System Implementation: If installing an LMS on your own servers, IT staff will support this work. They can support negotiations with the vendor and ask critical questions about the robustness of the systems being considered. They can also partner with you to identify how different eLearning solutions may fit in the existing technical architecture of your organization.

Interface Management: IT specialists will help map and assess the touchpoints between an LMS

and other systems your organization uses, like your HR system, internal social networks and other knowledge management platforms (like intranets).

LMS Administration Roles and Workflow: IT staff will launch personnel information into a new LMS and can help set administration and reporting features.

Security and Access: IT staff will help you understand and set security settings to protect your employee's personal information in an LMS and meet country-specific security requirements; can help identify the technical steps required to

facilitate virtual access for global audiences; and can help enable mobile access if provided as part of the LMS. For eLearning with heavy bandwidth requirements (e.g., many attendees at a single webinar, or streaming video), IT staff can help you understand and navigate performance-speed trade-off decisions.

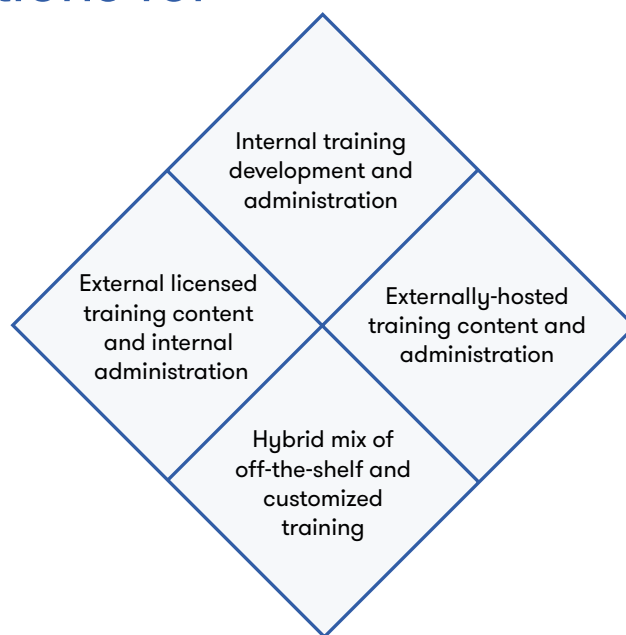
Bottom Line: When it comes to eLearning, IT teams are important business partners with the learning team. Be an informed consumer and user of online services by involving key personnel early and often.

Evaluating Training Options for Your Organization

Rather than maintaining brick and mortar training centers, organizations are investing in virtual universities, often with the help of external training providers. In developing training strategies for the future, organizations have important choices about whether they want to outsource training, develop and administer training in-house or use a hybrid solution.

Again, it is important to separate **training content** from **training administration** in making outsourcing and insourcing choices. Some organizations choose to operate an internal LMS, but license training courses from external training providers to serve through that system.

Other organizations maintain internal training groups to develop tailored customized training for their organization; training is also administered in-house. On the opposite end of the spectrum, some organizations outsource both training content and administration to a trusted training partner.



Hybrid solutions are also possible. These include partnering with an external training provider to tailor their off-the-shelf content to meet specific organization needs; or providing off-the-shelf training modules, but supplementing them with internal discussion groups or supplemental coaching or workshops to help apply lessons to the organization and reaffirm key learning points.

Questions to Decide What's Next

This paper has introduced key topics related to the role of training in your organization's talent management toolkit. The best training strategies are aligned with an organization's specific mission goals—training is not just a feel-good activity; it is a mission-critical support function. We leave you with the following questions for designing or evaluating an existing training program.

1. What's going well with our existing training activities? How do we know it is going well? What metrics are we using to assess?
2. What is not going well with our training activities? Where are our gaps? Where do we lack data about the impact of our training?
3. Based on what's going well and what's not going well, what actions should we take from here—right now, and in the long-term?
4. What else do we need to learn to move forward?

About Pryor Learning

Fred Pryor Seminars and CareerTrack, divisions of Pryor Learning, create one of the most respected international providers of professional training. Since pioneering the one-day seminar in 1970, our organization has built a reputation for high-quality, convenient, and practical business-skills training around the world, in every industry and sector. Our recent name change to Pryor Learning, LLC better represents our full line of training which includes live seminars, online training, and enterprise solutions.

Today, with more than 13 million satisfied customers, we continue to pride ourselves in providing the superior training you've come to expect. Our cutting-edge research and course development are designed to meet the adult learning needs of your employees and your organization.

At Pryor, we offer training for any learning type—in-person and through live seminars, online with videos, quizzes, e-books, webinars. Every learning style is an option based on the company

and employee needs. As a cloud-based LMS, learning is three clicks and three days away from adoption of learning plan.

Tracking and measurement can be cost-effective and simplified. Drive accountability and ROI with Pryor's advanced admin features. Admins can assign, track, and report on training in real-time with single-click reports or export to Excel. Learning objectives can be tied to professional development goals to more accurately gauge employee performance around review time.

With the Pryor LMS turnkey solution, businesses can be up and running quickly. Ongoing support and maintenance is covered. You can save money on resources and manpower to launch and train employees on how to use the system. Built-in custom marketing campaigns are available to aid in the launch and roll-out of company directed business goals such as employee emails or poster campaigns to welcome new learners; and reminders to existing learners on where to access to all online and in-person offerings. ■

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